

tion in which the blunt tip extends beyond the puncture tip of the needle cannula to effectively blunt the device; [and]

C¹ (d) a guide surface on the device that leads axially towards the through-bore so that the guide surface can serve as a guide for the insertion of the blunting member into the through-bore during assembly of the device[.]; and

(e) a detent and groove engagement between the external component and the internal component configured to inhibit movement from the blunting configuration to the sharpened configuration.

C² 6. (Amended) The device of claim 2 [or claim 4] wherein the needle cannula defines a longitudinal axis and wherein at least a portion of the guide surface defines an angle α relative to the needle cannula axis and wherein the angle has a magnitude in the range of from about 5 to 75 degrees.

7. (Amended) The device of claim 2[, or claim 3 [or claim 4] comprising a guide member disposed at the mounting end of the needle cannula, the guide member defining the guide surface.

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C³ 31. (Amended) [In a] A method for assembling a self-blunting needle device for a syringe, the device comprising [inserting] an internal component comprising a blunting member [with] and an external component comprising a needle cannula having an axially-extending through-bore therein [dimensioned and configured to receive the internal component], the [improvement] method comprising advancing the blunting member [internal component] into contact with a guide surface configured to lead axially to the through-bore to guide the [internal component] blunting member into the bore to produce an assembled device.

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20 34. (Amended) The method of claim 33¹⁹ wherein the guide surface defines an entry aperture that is larger than the through-bore of the external component and converges to a gate aperture that is not larger than the through-bore of the external component, the gate aperture facing and being aligned with the through-bore, the method comprising aligning the internal component with the entry aperture and advancing the internal component towards the external

C4 component so that the internal component passes through the entry aperture, into contact with the guide surface and then through the [exit] gate aperture and into the bore.

2635. (Amended) A method for assembling a self-blunting needle device comprised of (i) an external component comprising a needle cannula [having an outside diameter, a through-bore] having a through-bore [diameter], a puncture tip and a mounting end and a guide member having a first end and a second end and a passage that extends axially from the first end to the second end and further comprising at the first end a first guide surface that leads axially to the passage and at the second end a second guide surface that leads axially to the passage. wherein the passage is sized to receive the needle cannula; and (ii) an internal component comprising an elongate blunting member having [an outside diameter and] a blunt tip, and, after assembly, being disposed within the through-bore of the needle cannula;

C5 the method comprising the steps of:

(a) disposing the needle cannula with its mounting end disposed towards and in alignment with the second guide surface and advancing the needle cannula into contact with the second guide surface and into the passage and into alignment with the first gate aperture.

(b) [(a)] positioning a guide member having a guide surface relative to the external component so that the guide surface leads axially to the through-bore; and

(c) [(b)] advancing the blunting member into contact with the guide surface to guide the blunting member into the through-bore of the needle cannula.

26 2741. (Amended) The method of claim 39 comprising providing a guide member having a first end and a second end and a passage that extends axially from the first end to the second end and further comprising at the first end a first guide surface that leads axially to a first gate aperture aligned with the passage and at the second end a second guide surface that leads axially to the passage, wherein the passage is sized to receive the needle cannula,

C6 the method further comprising, before steps (a) and (b), disposing the needle cannula with its mounting end disposed towards and in alignment with the second guide surface and advancing the needle cannula into contact with the second guide surface and into the passage and into alignment with the first gate aperture.

Add claim 49 and 50.